



● POLITY

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## 5,000 troops for Manipur to quell violence

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**CONTEXT:** The Union Home Ministry would deploy 50 additional companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), comprising nearly 5,000 personnel in Manipur in the next few days amid violence and killings in the State.

The State government on Monday constituted a two-member panel to investigate the death following mass resignation by office-bearers of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, mostly in Jiribam district, over the prevailing “unwelcome and helpless situation”. Party offices attacked

The government extended the ban on Internet and mobile data in seven districts by two days. Jiribam is not among these districts. The curfew in Imphal East, Imphal West, and Bishnupur districts was extended.

Home Minister Amit Shah reviewed the security situation for the second consecutive day. The Minister conducted a detailed review with senior officials in Delhi and also reviewed the deployment of the security forces in Manipur.

The body of a 25-year-old woman, likely the sixth victim from the Meitei family abducted by miscreants from Jiribam on November 11, was found in the Barak river in Assam. The bodies of other five members, including an eight-month-old boy and a two-year-old boy, were recovered between November 14 and 17 and a post-mortem was conducted on Monday at Silchar Medical College in Assam. At least 22 people have been killed in the State in fresh round of violence since November 7.

Three cases of violent crimes against women and children that have been reported in the State since November 7 have been handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for a probe. The cases include the killing of a 31-year-old Hmar woman in Jiribam who was burnt to death on November 7 in Jiribam, the abduction and killing of three women and three children by armed militants on November 11 during an encounter with security forces in Jiribam and the killing of a woman farmer in Bishnupur on November 9.

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh chaired a meeting with the NDA legislators in the State’s capital Imphal, about 220 km away, in the evening. A BJP legislator, who attended the meeting convened primarily to review the law-and-order situation. A similar meeting was also chaired by the State’s security advisor Kuldiep Singh with top police and paramilitary officers.

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# As Delhi chokes, SC orders all curbs to stay till it lifts them, takes CAQM to task for delayed action

## ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT



**CONTEXT:** The Supreme Court directed that Stage IV of the Graded Response Plan (GRAP) should continue even if the Air Quality Index (AQI) fell below the “severe-plus” threshold of 450 slamming the Commission on Air Quality Management (CAQM) for delayed action even as pollution choked the national capital.

A Bench of Justices A.S. Oka and Augustine George Masih noted the Commission on Air Quality Management (CAQM), rather than taking pre-emptive action, waited in vain for the air to improve. The Bench ordered status quo on the heightened restrictions against air pollution until further it issued

further directions. Though the Delhi government stopped construction work in the capital, lawyers alerted the Bench to building work happening even within the court complex. The Air Quality Index (AQI) in the courtroom was 994.

Justice Oka immediately summoned the Supreme Court Secretary-General to read him GRAP-IV restrictions. The Supreme Court in its order noted that the AQI had crossed 400 on November 12, and instead of immediately directing the implementation of GRAP-III, the CAQM waited for 24 hours till November 14. The same had happened in the kicking in of GRAP-IV. The court found the approach of the CAQM “completely wrong”. The court directed all State governments which have areas within the National Capital Region (NCR) to strictly implement GRAP-IV.

# Nirmala allays growth dip worries, moots rate cut

## ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman batted for lower interest rates to spur private investments, while acknowledging that perishable vegetables continue to pose an inflation risk seeking to quell anxieties about a slowdown in the economy.

Ms. Sitharaman acknowledged that there has been moderation in some economic indicators. India’s economy remained resilient, underpinned by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, moderating inflation, robust external position, and continued fiscal consolidation that have reinforced confidence among consumers and businesses. The remarks assume significance in light of slackening momentum in the economy, marked by faltering urban demand and weak corporate results for the second quarter that some economists have even posited as a “cyclical slowdown”. There is no cause for undue concern. Recent high-frequency indicators also reflect sustained growth momentum. She also pointed to healthy growth in foreign direct investment inflows this year and foreign exchange reserves that “comfortably cover 11.8 months of imports and exceed 100 % of external debt, underlining the strong net buffer in the Indian economy.



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# Chennai-Vladivostok maritime corridor is operational: Sonowal

## ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

**CONTEXT:** The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal speaking to the media on the sidelines of the inaugural edition of 'Sagarmanthan: The Great Oceans Dialogue' thought leadership summit, organised by the Ministry in partnership with Observer Research Foundation noted the Chennai-Vladivostok eastern maritime corridor has become operational and is carrying oil, food, and machines.

India and Greece would work together on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) announced last year. India aims to be the best maritime nation in the world in all indices, outlining a 'maritime vision 2047'. The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal held bilateral talks with Christos Stylianides, Greece's Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy.

Out of the 139 marine nations across the world, we want to be on the top in all the verticals, whether it is port operations, cargo handling, ship ownership, ship building, ship repair, recycling, technology, and legislative reforms. The two-day dialogue has over 1,700 participants, including over 215 delegates from 60 countries.

The Chennai-Vladivostok corridor became operational at the end of last year. The government had stated earlier that the corridor would result in significant reduction in the time required to transport cargo between India and Far East Russia — by up to 16 days; from 40 to 24 days; and a significant reduction of the distance by up to 40 %.

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) announced during the G20 summit — it goes from India to UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, then three European countries, Italy, France and Greece. Ultimately this line will also have a railway line, [and] sea route totally over 4,800 km. India and Greece will work together. On the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime corridor, he said it had become operational and, along with the port in the Bay of Bengal, Paradip and Vizag also have connectivity. His remarks come in the backdrop of apprehensions on the progress of the IMEEC, given the volatile situation in West Asia in the backdrop of the attacks on Israel, and the continuing offensive in Gaza and Lebanon.

# SpaceX's Falcon-9 deploys Indian satellite into orbit

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**CONEXT:** India's GSAT-N2 (GSAT-20) communication satellite was successfully launched by SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket in the early hours of Tuesday.

After lifting off at 12.01 a.m. (Indian Standard Time) from the Space Launch Complex 40 (SLC-40) at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, Falcon-9 put the GSAT-N2 into a geosynchronous transfer orbit. GSAT-N2 is a Ka-band high throughput communication satellite of NewSpace India Ltd., which is the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation. According to the ISRO, the satellite is set to enhance broadband services and in-flight connectivity across the Indian region.

The GSAT-N2 satellite, featuring multiple spot beams and wideband Ka x Ka transponders, aims to support a large subscriber base with small user terminals, significantly boosting system throughput through its multi-beam architecture which allows frequency reuse. The GSAT-N2 satellite, with a lift-off mass of 4,700 kg, has a mission life of 14 years.

# 'Global South hit by food, fuel crises due to conflicts'

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking at the G-20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, highlighted the severe impact of global conflicts on food, fuel, and fertilizer crises, particularly in the Global South.

He emphasized that the G-20 must prioritize addressing these challenges to ensure meaningful discussions. Complimenting Brazil's G-20 presidency for continuing the people-focused approach initiated at India's New Delhi summit, he reiterated the importance of the "One earth, one family, one future" ethos. Modi delivered these remarks during a session on social inclusion, hunger, and poverty, attended by global leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

On the opening day of the G-20 summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India's significant contributions to

combating poverty and hunger, aligning with the launch of a global alliance supported by 80 nations. He praised the initiative as a key step toward global food security and uplifting vulnerable communities.

Modi emphasized India's dual approach of "Back to basics" and "March to future," focusing on organic farming, millet promotion, and climate-resilient crops. He detailed India's achievements, including pulling 250 million people out of poverty in a decade, distributing free food grains to 800 million citizens, and implementing the world's largest health insurance and crop insurance schemes. India has also supported women micro-entrepreneurs, benefiting over 300 million, and developed 2,000 climate-resilient crop varieties as part of its 'Digital Agriculture Mission.' Modi also stressed India's contributions to food security initiatives in Africa and beyond.

## More efficient methods of tracking stubble burning needed, say experts

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** Experts suggest that the current approach to satellite-based tracking of farm fires by government agencies may be leading to under-reporting the number of fires with air quality in Delhi plummeting to hazardous levels, despite a five-year decline in the instances of stubble burning in Punjab.

The data on fire counts are from a heat-sensing instrument on two American satellites — Suomi-NPP and NOAA-20 polar-orbiting satellites. Instruments on polar-orbiting satellites typically observe a wildfire at a given location a few times a day as they orbit earth, pole to pole. They pass over India from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. The instrument on them, called the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS), can sense aerosols, smoke, heat and is considered the most accurate to track wildfires across the globe. While the satellites map any particular location twice in 24 hours, they can miss fires that are set and extinguished outside the period of tracking.

The data from another satellite, the GEO-KOMSAT 2A, a Korean satellite that, unlike the polar satellites, tracked the same swathe of earth continuously, seemed to suggest that there was a spike in smoke and fires in the late afternoon in the Punjab province in Pakistan and Punjab in India. Moreover, the quantity of aerosols, or airborne pollutants, in the atmosphere had not shown any measurable change despite a decline in fire counts.

As of November 17, there have been 42,314 fires reported since September 15. This is the lowest since such data was made publicly available in 2012. In 2016, 1,33,442 fires were reported during a comparable period — an all-time high, according to bulletins by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute.

Last year, 65,600 fires were recorded — about half of them from Punjab alone. The State, being India's highest paddy cultivator, has been responsible for 50-60% of farm fires in most years. This year, however, Punjab reported only 8,404 fires as of November 17, or a fifth of the total. Haryana too has reported a record low of only 1,000 fires.

Other researchers also suggest that merely relying on fire counts from the polar satellites may be inadequate and newer satellite data parameters, such as estimating the actual extent of fields burned, may be a more accurate indicator of the true measure of stubble burning. The eastern Pakistan has reported a massive spike in air pollution in the past 10 days and therefore would have ferried great quantities of pollutants across the border.

## DIPAM issues revised capital restructuring norms for CPSEs

### ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** The Finance Ministry on Monday came out with revised guidelines for capital restructuring by Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), mandating them to pay a minimum of 30 % of net profit, or 4 % of the net worth, whichever is higher as an annual dividend.

As per the guidelines issued by the Department of Investment and Capital Asset Management (DIPAM), financial sector Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) like Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) may pay a minimum annual dividend of 30 % of PAT subject to the limit, if any, under any extant legal provisions. In the earlier guideline issued in 2016, the dividend payment requirement was 30 % of Profit After Tax (PAT), or 5 % of net worth, whichever is higher. Besides, there was no separate mention of financial sector CPSEs.

The revised guidelines noted Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), whose market price of the share has been less than the book value consistently for the last six months, and have a net worth of at least ₹ 3,000 Cr and cash and bank

balance of over ₹ 1,500 Cr may consider the option to buy back shares. Every CPSE may consider issuing bonus shares when its defined reserves and surplus are equal to or more than 20 times its paid-up equity share capital. Any listed CPSE, whose market price exceeds 150 times its face value consistently for the last six months, may consider splitting off its shares. Further, there should be a cooling-off period of at least three years between two successive share splits. The guidelines will also apply to subsidiaries of CPSEs, where the parent central public sector enterprise holds more than 51% stake. All issues regarding capital management or restructuring of CPSEs will be discussed in the Inter-Ministerial forum called Committee for Monitoring of Capital Management and Dividend by CPSEs (CMCDC) chaired by Secretary DIPAM. These guidelines do not apply to public sector banks, public sector insurance companies and also to the body corporate, which is prohibited from distributing profits to its members like companies set up under section 8 of the Companies Act. The guidelines shall be applicable from the current financial year 2024-25.

The revised guidelines further said that these CPSEs may consider paying an interim dividend every quarter after quarterly results, or at least twice a year. It also mandated all listed CPSEs to pay at least 90% of the projected annual dividend in one or more instalments as interim dividends. The final dividend of the last fiscal may be paid soon after the AGM is over in September of every year.

## How sustainable is India's path to net-zero with 45 years left?

### ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT



**CONTEXT:** The outcome of the 2024 U.S. presidential election may significantly influence global climate action, potentially more than COP-29, highlighting the difficulty of aligning global cooperation with national interests.

Developed countries with ample resources may resist change, while populous, developing nations like India face unique challenges. India has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 and has initiated supportive policies, but its path is fraught with financial and resource constraints, including limited land and water availability. These factors restrict India's options for a sustainable long-term climate strategy.

#### Why net-zero at all?

Climate change is intensifying, and to prevent catastrophic consequences, the global temperature rise must be limited to 1.50 C above pre-industrial levels. The current rise is approximately 1.10 C, leaving a narrow carbon budget of 400-500 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> for a 50-67 % chance of staying within this limit. With annual global emissions at 40 GtCO<sub>2</sub>, drastic reductions are essential. While many countries have announced net-zero targets, an immediate and significant decrease in total emissions is critical to meet the target and avert irreversible damage.

#### Is net-zero equitable?

Developed countries, primarily responsible for climate change, are expected to lead the transition to net-zero emissions before 2050 and provide substantial financial support for climate action. However, these commitments are falling short, leaving developing nations, particularly small island states, disproportionately affected by climate change. This inequity in climate responsibility and action remains a major challenge. The upcoming COP-29 aims to establish consensus on the necessary level of climate financing to address these disparities.

India's per-capita emissions are among the world's lowest, but wealth disparities significantly influence emissions, with the richest 10 % responsible for nearly half of the country's emissions. Climate change disproportionately impacts economically weaker sections. India's vast diversity includes regions with varying pollution levels, but adopting developed-world lifestyle standards nationwide would strain its carrying capacity. This could lead to critical challenges like food shortages from groundwater depletion, urban heat stress from vehicular pollution and AC use, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable land-use changes by the 2040s. Unsustainable lifestyle aspirations risk undermining access to basic needs in the long term.

#### A new consumption corridor

India's power demand could increase 9-10 times by 2070 if consumption grows unchecked and all end-use applications are electrified. Meeting this demand entirely through renewable energy would require over 5,500 GW of solar



and 1,500 GW of wind capacity, a substantial leap from current levels. While achievable with a sole focus on renewable energy expansion, this target poses significant challenges if India must also prioritize food security, forest cover, and biodiversity. Land-use modelling suggests exceeding 3,500 GW of solar and 900 GW of wind capacity would necessitate major land trade-offs, complicating the balance between energy and ecological priorities.

India faces the challenge of providing a good quality of life for its population while meeting its climate goals, which has significant material and energy implications. Relying on economic models like the Kuznets curve, which suggests economic growth can decouple from carbon emissions, is misleading, as even wealthy nations have achieved decoupling only by outsourcing emissions to poorer countries. India should avoid adopting unsustainable Western lifestyle standards and instead focus on a long-term strategy based on "sufficiency consumption corridors." These corridors set a floor for developmental needs and a ceiling to prevent excess consumption. Demand-side measures will be crucial to maintaining sustainable consumption patterns, especially as India's power demand could increase six- to sevenfold by 2070.

### Demand and supply measures

India must adopt demand-side measures like energy-efficient construction, appliances, public and non-motorized transport, rail-based intercity travel, local products, mindful diets, and alternative industrial fuels to curb energy demand sustainably. On the supply side, decentralizing energy production with rooftop solar and solar pumps, alongside expanding nuclear power for low-carbon baseload energy, is essential to diversify the energy mix and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. As global climate targets tighten, India's timely actions in these areas are critical. While some factors, like international leadership, remain beyond control, India must act decisively on what it can influence to avoid irreversible consequences.

## This time for Africa

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visits to Nigeria, Brazil for the G-20, and Guyana hold significance not only for strengthening bilateral relations but also as a demonstration of India's commitment to the Global South.

During his visit to Abuja, the first by an Indian Prime Minister since Manmohan Singh's 2007 trip when a Strategic Partnership was established, Mr. Modi and Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu reaffirmed cooperation in areas such as defense. Mr. Modi highlighted common challenges like terrorism, separatism, piracy, and drug trafficking that both nations must address collaboratively. Honored with Nigeria's prestigious "Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger" award, Mr. Modi dedicated it to the people of India and the enduring friendship between India and Nigeria. This relationship dates back to Nigeria's independence from Britain in 1960, when India extended support by sending teachers and doctors to the country.

The Indian diaspora in Nigeria, West Africa's largest, plays a crucial role in fostering strong economic and cultural ties between the two nations. With approximately 200 Indian companies investing \$ 27 billion in sectors like pharmaceuticals, healthcare, agriculture, and energy, the partnership leverages shared challenges like poverty, pollution, and population density to develop low-cost technologies and sustainable solutions.

Nigeria, a top African economy and a new BRICS partner, adds strategic importance to India's global partnerships. The recent G-20 summit in Brazil highlighted these ties, especially as the African Union joined the G-20 in 2023, reflecting India's commitment to amplifying the voice of the Global South. However, India's broader engagement with Africa faces criticism for inconsistent follow-through, as seen in the lukewarm participation in the latest "Voice of the Global South" (VoGS) conference. While India's efforts to strengthen South-South cooperation are recognized, the need for more robust and sustained action remains evident.

India aims to strengthen its leadership in the Global South by aligning platforms like the Voice of the Global South (VoGS) summit with G-20 processes, potentially increasing engagement by allowing the annual G-20 host to lead VoGS. Renewing initiatives like the India-Africa Forum summit, overdue since 2015, is also a priority, with plans to convene it early next year.

As India deepens ties across the Southern Hemisphere, addressing global challenges like governance, food, energy, and health security, it must align its ambitious vision with concrete actions. Prime Minister Modi's recent diplomatic efforts highlight the need for India to sustain its presence and influence across the developing world with agility and commitment.

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## India restricts WhatsApp sharing data with other Meta entities, imposes \$25.4 mn fine

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** India's competition watchdog directed WhatsApp to refrain from sharing user data for advertising purposes with other applications owned by Meta for a period of five years and fined the U.S. tech giant \$ 25.4 million on Monday over antitrust violations related to the messaging application's 2021 privacy policy.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) launched a probe in March 2021 into WhatsApp's privacy policy, which allowed data sharing with Facebook and its units, sparking global backlash. Tech giants, including Apple, Google and Meta face new regulatory challenges with India's proposed EU-like antitrust law. The Indian government is currently examining a February report from a panel established by the corporate affairs ministry. The report proposed a new "Digital Competition Bill" to complement existing antitrust laws. The U.S.-India Business Council, a key U.S. lobby group has already opposed the move, fearing its business impact.

## Around 6.5 lakh applications come in for PM's Internship Scheme pilot project

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** As many as 6.5 lakh youth had applied for internships under the PM Internship Scheme in Top Companies (Scheme) pilot project as of Friday last, when the window closed for the 1.27 lakh opportunities initially being offered by Corporate India under the scheme.

The project is aimed at providing on-the-job training to one crore people over five years. The number of applications does not equate to the number of individual applicants, clarified an official source, as every applicant can apply for five different internships that have been offered. The scheme's pilot, learnings from which would be used to scale it up for a full-fledged roll-out, has attracted internship offers from 280 major firms such as Tata Steel, ITC Limited, ICICI Bank, and the Mahindra Group. The deadline for applications was extended from November 10 to November 15 to provide youngsters more time to apply.

Unemployed youth between 21 and 24 years of age, who do not have a family member earning over ₹8 lakh per annum, are eligible for the scheme. Companies that have signed up for the scheme would now begin the selection process. As per the original timeline, the selected interns are expected to begin their year-long tenure with companies on December 2. Many youth who had registered said they were hopeful of getting selected, while for a few it was a "back-up" option. According to the dashboard on the PM internship portal, internships have been offered across States and Union Territories, with the highest being in Maharashtra at 14,694, followed by Tamil Nadu at 13,263. The lowest was from Lakshadweep, which had just two offers. Delhi offered a total of 3,543 opportunities.

According to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' guidelines, companies will pay ₹500 per month from their CSR funds, based on attendance and conduct, after which the government would initiate a direct benefit transfer of ₹4,500 to the intern's Aadhaar-seeded bank account. A one-time grant of ₹6,000 for incidental expenses would be provided to an intern upon joining.

## Monitor portfolios proactively, handle potential risks, Das tells bank boards

### ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das asked banks to proactively monitor their portfolios, identify areas of over-concentration, and take pre-emptive measures to address potential risks and challenges.

The Governor asked bank boards to strengthen the internal governance framework to curb unethical practices, such as mis-selling of products or opening of accounts without proper KYC verification. In his keynote address at the Conference of Directors of Private Sector Banks, bank boards needed to continuously assess external factors such as regulatory

changes, shifting market winds, overall macroeconomic changes and advances in technology.

Boards should also be fully cognisant of the organisation's internal strengths, vulnerabilities, and operational conditions so that they have a clear situational awareness. Excessive reliance on specific sectors, markets, or customer segments can expose the bank to amplified risks, particularly in times of economic stress or industry shifts.

Boards can play a proactive role by regularly monitoring the bank's portfolios, identifying potential areas of over-concentration, and taking pre-emptive steps to maintain a balanced approach. The boards must also remain vigilant to operational risks, particularly those arising from IT outsourcing and reliance on third-party vendors. He also said that the incentives for bank staff should be carefully structured so as to not encourage them to indulge in unethical practices. While such practices may yield short-term gains, they ultimately expose the bank to significant long-term risks, including reputational damage, supervisory scrutiny, and financial penalties.

## Sri Lankan President Dissanayake installs new Cabinet after election win

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



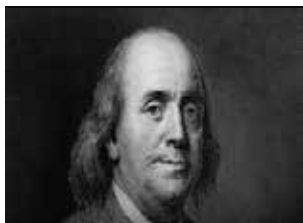
**CONTEXT:** President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Monday installed Sri Lanka's new 21-member Cabinet, days after his National People's Power [NPP] alliance won a massive mandate in the parliamentary polls. He retained key portfolios of Defence, Finance, Planning, and Digital Economy.

Mr. Dissanayake reappointed Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya, who, along with the team of ministers, was sworn in at the Presidential Secretariat on Monday. Vijitha Herath, Foreign Minister in the interim government, will continue in the position.

The 225-member legislature will include several young, first-time MPs

and 21 women, the highest female representation in Sri Lankan Parliament, according to local media. The NPP also nominated Sugath Wasantha De Silva, a person with visual disability, to the legislature, through the additional seats it won based on its vote share. It is the first time in Sri Lanka's history that a person with disability will serve as MP. With 159 seats in Parliament, the NPP government has over a two-thirds majority to take forward its ambitious reform agenda, while rebuilding the country's broken economy.

A delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is currently in Colombo to review its ongoing programme. Following this third review, the Fund is expected to release the next tranche of about \$ 337 million of the \$ 2.9 billion package it pledged to Sri Lanka in 2022. Mr. Dissanayake "urged the IMF to maintain a balanced approach" that considers the hardships faced by citizens. Mr. Dissanayake told the delegation that his government was committed to effective social spending, prioritising "combating child poverty and malnutrition, and providing better support for differently abled individuals".



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*—Benjamin Franklin*





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